I CLAIM:

1. A data collection module, comprising:

a) a support having a predetermined form factor;

b) a radio frequency (RF) reader supported by the support, and operative for interrogating an RF element associated with a target, and for reading RF data relating to the target from the interrogated element; and

c) a magnetic stripe reader supported by the support, and operative for sensing magnetically encoded data in a stripe on a card, and for reading the encoded data.

2. The data collection module of claim 1, wherein the form factor occupies a space for an SE 1200 scan engine.

3. The data collection module of claim 1, wherein the support includes a printed circuit board on which electrical circuit components for the RF and stripe readers are mounted.

4. The data collection module of claim 1, wherein the RF reader includes a transmitting antenna, a receiving antenna, and a wireless data transceiver for interrogating the RF element via the transmitting antenna, and for reading the RF data via the receiving antenna.

5. The data collection module of claim 1, wherein the magnetic stripe reader includes a sensor.

6. The data collection module of claim 1, wherein the RF reader and the magnetic stripe reader are supported within the predetermined form factor.

7. The data collection module of claim 1, wherein the RF reader and the magnetic stripe reader generate digital signals corresponding to the RF data and the magnetically encoded data respectively, and wherein the readers share a central processing unit for receiving and processing the digital signals, and for outputting the processed signals through a common interface.

8. A data collection terminal, comprising:

a) a hand-held housing;

b) a support supported by the housing and having a predetermined form factor;

c) a radio frequency (RF) reader supported by the support, and operative for interrogating an RF element associated with a target, and for reading RF data relating to the target from the interrogated element; and

d) a magnetic stripe reader supported by the support, and operative for sensing magnetically encoded data in a stripe on a card, and for reading the encoded data.

9. The data collection terminal of claim 8, wherein the form factor occupies a space for an SE 1200 scan engine.

10. The data collection terminal of claim 8, wherein the support includes a printed circuit board on which electrical circuit components for the RF and stripe readers are mounted.

11. The data collection terminal of claim 8, wherein the RF reader includes a transmitting antenna, a receiving antenna, and a wireless data transceiver for interrogating the RF element via the transmitting antenna, and for reading the RF data via the receiving antenna.

12. The data collection terminal of claim 8, wherein the magnetic stripe reader includes a sensor.

13. The data collection terminal of claim 8, wherein the RF reader and the magnetic stripe reader are supported within the predetermined form factor.

14. The data collection terminal of claim 8, wherein the RF reader and the magnetic stripe reader generate digital signals corresponding to the RF data and the magnetically encoded data respectively, and wherein the readers share a central processing unit for receiving and processing the digital signals, and for outputting the processed signals through a common interface.

15. A data collection method, comprising the steps of:

a) supporting a radio frequency (RF) reader on a support having a predetermined form factor;

b) interrogating an RF element associated with a target, and reading RF data relating to the target from the interrogated element; and

c) supporting a magnetic stripe reader supported on the support; and

d) sensing magnetically encoded data in a stripe on a card, and reading the encoded data.

16. The data collection method of claim 15, wherein the form factor occupies a space for an SE 1200 scan engine.

17. The data collection method of claim 15; and further comprising the step of mounting electrical circuit components for the RF and stripe readers on a printed circuit board.

18. The data collection method of claim 15, wherein the supporting steps are performed by positioning the RF reader and the magnetic stripe reader within the predetermined form factor.

19. The data collection method of claim 15; and further comprising the step of generating digital signals corresponding to the RF data and the magnetically encoded data, sharing a central processing unit for receiving and processing the digital signals, and outputting the processed signals through a common interface.